

## Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01     SEOUL 06667 251121Z

22

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PA-01 PRS-01 ACDA-07 /077 W

----- 115842

O R 251049Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9064

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USIA WASHDC

CINCPAC

CINCUNC SEOUL

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SEOUL 6667

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, MOPS, KS, KN, US

SUBJECT: ROK REACTIONS TO U.S. RESPONSE TO DMZ INCIDENT

REF: (A) STATE 206131 (DTG 190517Z AUG 76), (B) SEOUL 6621  
(DTG 240911Z AUG 76)

SUMMARY: EMOTIONAL KOREAN REACTION TO US "POLICY SHIFT" ON NORTH  
KOREAN MESSAGE OF AUG. 21 HIT A PEAK ON AUG. 24 BUT TODAY IT IS  
SUBSIDING. END SUMMARY.

1. ALL ROK NEWSPAPERS ON AUG. 24 GAVE HEADLINE OR MAJOR TREAT-  
MENT TO STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN ROBERT FUNSETH'S STATEMENT  
OF AUGUST 23 TO EFFECT THAT US SEES NORTH KOREAN (NK) STATEMENT  
EXPRESSING REGRET OVER PANMUNJOM INCIDENT AS A "POSITIVE STEP."  
A SOURCE IN ROK FONOFF (WE ASSUME, MINISTER PAK, TONG-CHIN)  
SAID THAT THIS STATEMENT HAD BEEN DISCUSSED IN ADVANCE WITH SEOUL  
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02     SEOUL 06667 251121Z

AND THAT FONOFF DID NOT CONSIDER THAT BASIC POSITION OF US ON

PANMUNJOM INCIDENT HAD CHANGED. PAPERS ALSO REPORTED MEETING OF KOREAN AMB HAM PYONG-CHUN WITH UNDER SECRETARY HABIB AUGUST 23, SAYING THAT THEY DISCUSSED THE BACKGROUND OF THE CHANGE OF US ATTITUDE TOWARD KIM IL-SONG'S REPLY, AND THAT HABIB EXPLAINED TO HAM THAT US ATTITUDE HAS BEEN CONSISTENT.

2. NEWSPAPERS ALSO GAVE TOP PLAY TO PRESIDENT FORD'S STATED HOPE THAT NORTH KOREA WOULD NOT MISCALCULATE THE FIRM DETERMINATION OF THE U.S. REGARDING THE KOREAN PENINSULA PROBLEM, ALTHOUGH FORD FAVORS PEACE IN KOREAN PENINSULA. PAPERS ALSO NOTED UN COMMAND (UNC) REQUEST FOR A MAC MEETING AT PANMUNJOM WITHIN THE DAY. SOURCE IN ROK FONOFF QUOTED ABOVE ALSO NOTED THAT WHETHER OR NOT THE PANMUNJOM INCIDENT CAN BE SETTLED DEPENDS ON NK ATTITUDE AT THE MAC MEETING.

3. PAPERS HAVE CARRIED REACTIONS OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLYMEN SUCH AS KIM YONG-TAE (DRP), KANG PYONG-GYU (DRP), YI YONG-GUN (YU-JONG-HOI), CHONG IL-HYONG (NDP), OM YONG-DAL (NDP, MIN PYONG-GI (DRP), AND KIM HYONG-IL (NDP), ALL OF WHOM EITHER EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT AT FUNSETH'S STATEMENT OR DEMANDED AN APOLOGY AND REPARATIONS FROM NK.

4. EDITORIALS: INITIAL REACTION WAS VERY STRONG ON AUGUST 24, PARTICULARLY IN INDEPENDENT TONG-A ILBO AND IMPORTANT CHUNG ANG ILBO, WHOSE EDITORIALS DEMAND USG TAKE STRONG MEASURES AGAINST NK SO IT WILL NOT REPEAT SUCH PROVOCATIONS. EDITORIALS IN GOVERNMENT SEOUL SHIMMUN AND LESSER SHINA ILBO WERE SIMILAR, BUT MUCH Milder IN TONE.

5. TONGA ILBO EDITORIAL FOR AUGUST 24 IS ENTITLED "IS AMERICA YIELDING AGAIN?--FOR THE SAKE OF WORLD ORDER, MUNICH-LIKE CONCESSIONS MUST BE AVOIDED." THE EDITORIAL STATES BY WAS OF PREFACE THAT "WE MUST NOT FORGET THAT KIM'S ANSWER IS FULL OF THE SLY INTENTION" TO SOOTH AMERICA, AND CONTINUES, "WHAT MUST BE ESPECIALLY CLOSELY WATCHED IS THE RESPONSE OF THE US... WE ARE DEEPLY WORRIED THAT, AS IT HAS DURING THE 23-YEARS SINCE THE ARMISTICE, THE US, STEALTHILY AND INSIPIDLY SUBSIDING, WILL AGAIN ENCOURAGE THE WAR-LOVING QUALITY OF THE NK,... IF ROK AND US DO NOT SHOW FIRM RESOLUTION AND ACTIONS, BUT YIELD AS AT MUNICH, WE MUST BE FULLY AWARE THAT WE ARE GIVING A KNIFE TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03     SEOUL 06667 251121Z

THEIR WAR-LOVING CHARACTER."

6. CHUNG-ANG ILBO EDITORIAL AUGUST 24 SAID, "THE CHANGING US ATTITUDE TOWARD THE NK REPLY IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE. WE SHOULDN'T MAKE HASTY CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE MOTIVES BEHIND US ATTITUDES, BUT THERE MUST BE A CONFLICT OF VIEWS CONCERNING FOREIGN POLICY BETWEEN EXPERTS AND USG BECAUSE OF POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE NOVEMBER ELECTION. AMERICA MUST NOT

FORGET THE NIGHTMARE OF INDOCHINA DND MUST DEMONSTRATE A STRONG DETERMINATION TO CORRECT NK'S HABIT. WE FEAR THAT THE LUKEWARM ATTITUDE OF USG MAY ENCOURAGE NK."

7. IN ADDITION, THE MASS-CIRCULATION HANGUK ILBO SAID AUGUST 24 THAT THE TREE-CUTTING OPERATION WAS INSUFFICIENT TO DEMONSTRATE US DETERMINATION. "WE FAVOR FIRM US COUNTERMEASURES. USG SHOULDN'T CLOSE THE DMZ INCIDENT WITH THE TREE-CUTTING. WE URGE USG SHOW THEM ITS DETERMINATION THROUGH ACTION SO THAT USG CAN RESTORE ITS DIGNITY, WHICH WAS DEGRADED BY THE INDOCHINA SETBACK".

8. INDEPENDENT SHINA ILBO NOTED THAT "NK APPARENTLY TRIED TO SPLIT ROK AND US TO BUILD ANTI-WAR PUBLIC OPINION IN US TO WEAKEN US PLEDGES TO ROK, AND TO PREPARE FALSE PROPAGANDA FOR THE UP-COMING UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY. HOWEVER, NK HAS PRODUCED THE REVERSE EFFECT AND DUG ITSELF INTO A HOLE. IT HAS FURTHER STRENGTHENED THE FORD ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT FOR ROK AND ROK-US UNITY."

9. CHOSON ILBO RAN A COMMENTARY ARTICLE MORNING OF AUGUST 25 WRITTEN BY KIM TAE-JUNG, ITS WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT, ON THE AUGUST 23 MEETING BETWEEN HABIB AND HAM. HABIB REPORTEDLY EXPLAINED THAT US ATTITUDE TOWARD PANMUNJOM INCIDENT HAS BEEN CONSISTENT. HABIB REPORTEDLY TOLD HAM, "THE UNACCEPTABLE IS UNACCEPTABLE. HOWEVER, NK ATTITUDE THIS TIME IS DIFFERENT FROM THE PAST, THAT IS, IT IS A "POSITIVE STEP," AND WE HAVE TO ADMIT IT AS SUCH. SINCE WE DON'T HAVE ANY OTHER GOOD ALTERNATIVE NOW, WE ARE TRYING TO GET ASSURANCES FOR THE SECURITY OF PERSONNEL AND FOR PREVENTION OF SUCH INCIDENTS, WHICH ROKG HAS DEMANDED UP TO NOW." HAN-SUK ILBO QUOTED HAM AS SAYING, AFTER HIS 15-MINUTE TALK WITH HABIB, "I HAVE NOT HEARD FROM HIM ANY GOOD NEWS."

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04     SEOUL 06667 251121Z

10. AUGUST 25 AFTERNOON PAPERS SHOW SOME SLACKENING OF CONCERN OVER U.S. REACTION, AS MOST HAVE MOVED ON TO OTHER SUBJECTS. OFFICIAL SEOUL SHINMUN AND SEMI-OFFICIAL KYUNGHYANG SHINMUN DO FURTHER ADDRESS U.S. REACTION BUT VOICE MUTED CONCERN RATHER THAN DIRECT CRITICISM. MOREOVER KYUNGHYANG SHINMUN WHILE STILL "FRUSTRATED BY USG REACTION" ALSO STATES "WE ARE STILL COOL BECAUSE PRESIDENT FORD'S STATEMENTS ARE BELIEVED TO SHOW USG INTENTION TO SETTLE THROUGH STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH...ANGRY EARLY REACTION OF USG AND AMERICAN PEOPLE PROVED THAT THEY HAVE RENEWED RECOGNITION OF SERIOUSNESS OF KOREAN SITUATION...IT IS EASY TO KILL A MAD DOG, BUT WISER TO AVOID ITS BITE."

11. IN OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH ROK CONTACTS WE HAVE FREQUENTLY HEARD THEME OF APPARENT CRITICISM OF US FOR ATTEMPTING TO SMOOTH THINGS OVER AND ACCEPT NK POSITION RATHER THAN CONTINUING

DENUNCIATION AND REJECTION OF NK RESPONSE. WE HAVE ALSO BEEN TOLD BY YONSEI UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR YI KI-TAK THAT SOME ROK MILITARY OFFICERS HAVE IN CONVERSATIONS WITH HIM CONCLUDED THAT US "VASCILLATION" ON KIM IL SUNG MESSAGE RESSURECTS CONCERN THAT US, AS IN VIETNAM, MAY NOT PROVE RELIABLE AGAINST NORTH KOREA. AT SAME TIME, HOWEVER, IT IS EQUALLY NOTABLE THAT MANY OF OUR INTERLOCUTORS HAVE REMAINED SILENT WHEN SUBJECT RAISED AND NOT VOICED CRITICISM OF US ACTIONS.  
SNEIDER

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** DMZ, PRESS COMMENTS, DEATHS, BORDER INCIDENTS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 25 AUG 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** ShawDG  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976SEOUL06667  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760324-0569  
**From:** SEOUL  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19760821/aaaaarkx.tel  
**Line Count:** 178  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 4  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 STATE 206131, 76 SEOUL 6621  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** ShawDG  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 03 MAR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <03 MAR 2004 by morefirh>; APPROVED <24 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** ROK REACTIONS TO U.S. RESPONSE TO DMZ INCIDENT  
**TAGS:** SOPN, MOPS, KS, KN, US  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006